Urban Poverty in Quebec: Metropolitan Regions

Preliminary Research Report
June 1999
by Sylvain Schetagne

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Copyright © 1999 by the Canadian Council on Social Development. All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or by any information retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following staff at the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) for their work on this project:

Kevin Lee: Research and Technical Support
Cheryl Engler: Technical Support
Pierre Laliberté: Research Support
Ellen Adelberg: Senior Editor
Nancy Colborne Perkins: Copy Editor
Delaney Turner: Translation and Design

The CCSD would also like to thank the Social Development Partnerships Program of Human Resources Development Canada for its continuing support of the CCSD's research program.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en francais sous le titre : **La pauvreté dans les régions métropolitaines du Québec**

ISBN 0-88810-487-1

The views and analysis presented in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of Human Resources Development Canada.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

101-01072/

Table of Contents

page

Introduction 1

Methodology 2

Poverty in Quebec 3

An overview 3
A brief recap since 1990 3

Quebec's Census Metropolitan Areas 4

The CMA of Montréal 4
The CMA of Quebec 4
The CMA of Chicoutimi/Jonquière 5
The CMAs of Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières 5

The Poverty Gap 6

Possible Explanations 6

The demographic makeup of Quebec CMAs 6
The labour market 9

Conclusion 11

Endnotes 12

Glossary 13

Appendicies 14

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

List of Tables, Figures and Appendicies

Tables

page

Table 1: Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs for regions with populations of 100,000 or more 2

Table 2: Poverty in Quebec by age and gender, 1995 3

Table 3: Poverty rates of persons living alone and in families in Quebec, 1995 4

Table 4: Changes in the poverty rate in Quebec between 1990 and 1995 4

Table 5: Average poverty gap in Quebec (province) and CMAs 6

Table 6: Demographic makeup of Quebec (province) and CMAs, 1990 and 1995 8

Table 7: Poverty rates in Quebec (province) and CMAs by employment type, 1995 9

Table 8: Changes in employment type by category, Quebec (province) and CMAs, 1990 and 1995 10

Figures

Figure 1: Changes in poverty and unemployment rates in Quebec (province) and CMAs, 1990 and 1995 9

Appendicies

Appendix 1: Poverty in Quebec (province) 14

Appendix 2: Poverty in Montréal CMA 15

Appendix 3: Poverty in Quebec City CMA 16

Appendix 4: Poverty in Chicoutimi/Jonquière CMA 17

Appendix 5: Poverty in Sherbrooke CMA 18

Appendix 6: Poverty in Trois-Rivières CMA 19

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Introduction

The nature of poverty in Quebec has changed greatly over the past few decades. The combination of economic growth and increased job creation which lasted from the 1960s to the mid 1980s contributed to a decline in the provincial poverty rate.[1] Since the beginning of the 1990s, however, there have been several indications that poverty is once again on the rise in Quebec.

The number of people living below Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs[2] reached 23 per cent[3] in 1995, an increase of four percentage points from 1990. There was no improvement in the situation of lone-parent families, young families, women, or children and youth. The poverty rate dropped only for persons aged 65 and older.

The majority of people in Quebec – more than three of four people – live in the province's 25 largest urban centres. Home to industry, government and training centres, as well as to research facilities, urban areas are where the vast majority of jobs in the province are located. People's livelihoods in these urban centres are subject to economic restructuring, as well as to government intervention and the influence of different community groups.

To some extent, the character of a particular urban area can contribute to its poverty rate. This report takes a detailed look at the nature of poverty in Quebec in the province's five largest cities, taking into account the particular characteristics of each area. The following Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)[4] are compared: Montréal, Quebec, Chicoutimi/Jonquière, Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières.

This report examines changes in the nature of poverty in these areas since the beginning of the 1990s, according to family type and individual status. It also compares the similarities and differences in poverty rates among these urban areas. Finally, it examines the growth of poverty in these areas in relation to poverty in the province overall, in order to identify where poverty is increasing and where it is decreasing.

Methodology

Two tools were used to conduct this study. The first was data from Statistics Canada's 1991 and 1996 Censuses. These data are preferable to other data sources when studying poverty at a detailed level because they provide access to information about income earned in the previous year. The second tool used was Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs (LICOs). According to these cut-offs, a family or individual is considered to be in "straitened circumstances" if they spend significantly more (at least 20 percentage points more) of their income on food, clothing and shelter than an average family spends on these items. Although Statistics Canada does not call the LICOs poverty lines, many groups, including the CCSD, treat them as such.[5] The level of a particular LICO varies by the size of the family and by the population size of the region.

Because Statistics Canada does not calculate LICOs annually, existing LICOs can provide a basis for previous or subsequent years with an adjustment using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In this study, two base years were selected, then adjusted according to the CPI: the LICO for 1986 has been adjusted to correspond to 1991 figures, while an adjusted LICO for 1992 has been used for figures pertaining to 1996. Table 1 shows the adjusted LICOs for different family types in the urban areas studied in this report.

Table 1: Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs for regions with populations of 100,000 or more

	Low income cut-off 1990* (base year 1986)		Low income cut-off 1995 (base year 1992)	
Family size	Montréal and Quebec	Other Quebec CMAs	Montréal and Quebec	Other Quebec CMAs
1 person	$15,482	$13,598	$16,874	$14,473
2 people	$20,985	$18,434	$21,092	$18,091
3 people	$26,675	$23,429	$26,232	$22,500
4 people	$30,712	$26,973	$31,753	$27,235
5 people	$33,555	$29,471	$35,494	$30,445
6 people	$36,424	$31,989	$39,236	$33,654
7 or more people	$39,175	$34,409	$42,978	$36,864

*The low income cut-offs for 1990 are presented in 1995 dollars.
Source: Statistics Canada, *Income Distributions by Size in Canada, 1995.*

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Poverty in Quebec

An overview

In 1995, 23 per cent of the Quebec population lived below the poverty line (Appendix 1). Overall, more women than men were living in poverty: 25 per cent compared to 22 per cent. Persons aged 65 and older also made up a sizeable percentage of the poor population: in 1995, 27 per cent of people in this age group lived in poverty (Table 2).

Persons living alone were more likely than those living in families to be poor. Overall, 50 per cent of Quebeckers living alone in 1995 lived below the poverty line (Table 3). Women living alone and seniors aged 65 and older were also more likely to be poor than were men living alone and people under age 65. A person's chances of being poor were lower if they lived with their family: in 1995, 19 per cent of all Quebec families were poor.

However, some family types were more likely than others to be poor. For example, couples without children were less likely to be poor than were those with children: 13 per cent of childless couples in Quebec, regardless of their age, were poor (Appendix 1). On the other hand, families with children, particularly young families, were more likely to be poor: in 1995, 30 per cent of young two-parent families in Quebec lived in poverty. The situation was even more difficult for lone-parent families: in 1995, 55 per cent of all lone-parent families and 87 per cent of young lone-parent families were living below the LICO.

A brief review since 1990

Between 1990 and 1995, the number of people living in poverty in Quebec increased by 18 per cent (Table 4), with young people under age 35 being particularly affected. Despite their declining numbers in relation to the province's aging population, poverty among children under age 14 increased by 34 per cent, while the poverty rate among youth and young adults between the ages of 15 and 35 increased by 33 per cent. During this time, the rate of poverty for persons aged 65 and older declined (Appendix 1).

The increasing poverty rate among young Quebeckers is also evident in the rate of poverty among families. Young two-parent families experienced a significant increase in their poverty rate – 45 per cent – compared to an increase of 37 per cent among all two-parent families (Appendix 1). Young lone-parent families also experienced an increase in their poverty rate in relation to all lone-parent familes, however, the increase was not as dramatic.

Table 2: Poverty in Quebec by age and gender, 1995

	Total Population	Number of Poor	Distribution of Population	Distribution of Poor	Poverty Rate
Number of people	7,000,000	1,600,000	100%	100%	23%
By age					
Under age 15	1,350,000	350,000	19%	21%	26%
Aged 15 to 34	2,010,000	510,000	29%	31%	25%
Aged 35 to 64	2,850,000	570,000	41%	35%	20%
Aged 65 and older	770,000	210,000	11%	13%	27%
By gender					
Men	3,400,000	740,000	49%	17%	22%
Women	3,500,000	3,500,000	51%	83%	100%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Table 3: Poverty rates of persons living alone and in families in Quebec, 1995

	Total	Poor	Poverty Rate
Number of people	7,000,000	1,600,000	23%
Living alone	980,000	490,000	50%
Living in families	1,970,000	380,000	19%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Overall, seniors, women and persons living alone in Quebec were more likely than others to be poor. However, an examination of poverty in the province over the last 10 years shows that it is increasing much more quickly among young people, particularly young families.

per cent of all Quebec families. As in the rest of the province, the highest proportion of poor households were young lone-parent families (85 per cent) and young two-parent families (35 per cent).

Table 4: Changes in the poverty rate in Quebec between 1990 and 1995

	Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	
Total population	19%	23%	18%
Persons living alone	43%	50%	16%
Persons living in families	16%	19%	18%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Quebec's Census Metropolitan Areas

The CMA of Montréal

Because it contains 47 per cent of the total Quebec population, the CMA of Montréal has been particularly affected by poverty. In 1995, 890,000 of the 1.6 million Quebec residents living below the LICO – 56 per cent of the province's population – resided in the Montréal area (Appendix 2). Montréal's poverty rate reached 27 per cent in 1995, four percentage points above the provincial average. As in the rest of the province, persons living alone (52 per cent), women (29 per cent) and seniors aged 65 and older (33 per cent) were more likely than others to live in poverty.

Families in Montréal were more likely to be poor than families in the rest of the province: 23 per cent of Montréal families lived in poverty, compared to 19

Poverty increased in the Montréal CMA more quickly than elsewhere in the province. Between 1990 and 1995, the region's poverty rate increased by 26 per cent, compared to 18 per cent for the province as a whole. The group most affected by this increase was young people aged 15 to 34: their rate of poverty increased by 34 per cent during that period.

Young two-parent families in the Montréal region were also more likely to be affected by increasing poverty than were other families. While childless couples aged 65 and older experienced a 16 per cent decline in their rate of poverty, young two-parent families experienced a 40 per cent increase between 1990 and 1995.

The CMA of Quebec

The state of poverty in the Quebec CMA is similar to that of the province as a whole (Appendix 3). In 1995, 23 per cent of people living in or around Quebec City

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

were poor, an increase of four percentage points from 1990. About 50 per cent of people living alone and 20 per cent of families were poor. Poverty also increased rapidly among young people aged 15 to 34, particularly among young two-parent families.

The CMA of Chicoutimi/Jonquière

The nature and progression of poverty in the region of Chicoutimi/Jonquière was different than in Montréal and Quebec City. In both 1990 and 1995, the rate of poverty in this region was lower than in other CMAs examined in this study and lower than in the province as a whole. In 1995, 21 per cent of the Chicoutimi/Jonquière population were poor, two percentage points lower than the provincial average (Appendix 4). However, the region did experience the most significant increase in poverty over the same period – a jump of 34 per cent between 1990 and 1995.

All population groups, including seniors aged 65 and older, were affected by poverty. As in other regions, young people, particularly young families, were the most likely to be affected. Children under age 15 saw their rate of poverty increase by 36 per cent. Poverty among young two-parent families increased by 71 per cent between 1990 and 1995, jumping from 18 to 30 per cent.

The CMAs of Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières

Again, the rates of poverty in Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières were similar to those in the province as a whole, averaging 22 per cent in Sherbrooke and 24 per cent in Trois-Rivières (Appendicies 5 and 6). Poverty rates among persons living alone and in families were also similar to the provincial rates. However, changes in poverty in these regions differed greatly from those in the province as a whole and from other regions in this study. While poverty increased by 18 per cent across the province, it increased by only seven per cent in Trois-Rivières and by eight per cent in Sherbrooke between 1990 and 1995. This may be due to the higher rates of poverty in these regions in 1990 compared to Quebec as a whole.

While poverty increased in every metropolitan region examined in this study, not all regions experienced the same rate of increase. Certain age groups were more likely to be affected, depending upon the region. The one exception was young people, particularly young families, who experienced the greatest increase in poverty rates in every region in this study.

The Poverty Gap

For those who were already poor, how did they fare between 1990 and 1995? One way of assessing their situation is to measure the depth of their poverty: that is, the average amount of money that would be required to raise their income up to the poverty line. It is also possible to examine whether the gap between a poor person's income (including government transfers) and the poverty line is widening or narrowing.

Possible Explanations

While poverty is on the rise in Quebec, it is not increasing at the same rate across the province. The rate of poverty increased by a small margin in poorer regions of the province, and it increased dramatically in regions that were better off, such as Chicoutimi/Jonquière. Young families have been particularly vulnerable to the increase in poverty since the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, those who were already poor in 1990 were even worse off in 1995.

Table 5: Average poverty gap in Quebec (province) and CMAs

	Average Poverty Gap		
Persons living alone	**1990**	**1995**	**Change**
Quebec (province)	$5,700	$7,300	28%
Montréal	$6,300	$8,000	27%
Quebec City	$6,300	$8,000	27%
Chicoutimi/Jonquière	$5,700	$6,800	19%
Sherbrooke	$5,200	$6,500	25%
Trois-Rivières	$5,100	$6,600	29%
Average change in CMAs			26%
Persons living in families			
Quebec (province)	$8,700	$10,300	18%
Montréal	$9,900	$11,400	15%
Quebec City	$8,300	$9,800	18%
Chicoutimi/Jonquière	$8,000	$9,600	20%
Sherbrooke	$7,700	$8,700	13%
Trois-Rivières	$7,800	$8,800	13%
Average change in CMAs			16%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

As seen in Table 5, the average poverty gap[6] in Quebec in 1995 stood at $7,300 for persons living alone and $10,300 for a family of four. The gap for these two groups was highest in the Montréal and Quebec CMAs, while the situation in Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières was slightly better. Between 1990 and 1995, the poverty gap for persons living alone increased by an average of 26 per cent for the CMAs in this study, with the highest increase occurring in Trois-Rivières. The poverty gap for families increased by an average of 16 per cent, with the highest average increase – 20 per cent – occurring in Chicoutimi/Jonquière. Overall, the proportion of poor people not only increased in each region, the poverty gap grew as well.

How do we explain the differences between the character and the increase in poverty between regions? Two possible explanations are the demographic makeup and the labour market that are particular to each region.

The demographic makeup of Quebec CMAs

An aging population is certainly the most influential demographic change occurring at the end of this century. As seen in Table 6, the proportion of persons aged 35 and older across the province and in the regions in this study increased between 1990 and 1995, while the

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

proportion of persons aged 34 and younger declined. Historically, an aging population has brought about an increase in poverty. Over the past few years, however, this has ceased to be the case due to improved retirement plans and government supports. Seniors in Quebec aged 65 and older are currently experiencing a decline in their poverty rate.

An examination of the demographic makeup the CMAs in this study reveals that their populations do not differ greatly (Table 6). However, there are slight variations which may affect their respective poverty rates. The region of Chicoutimi/Jonquière, for example, has a larger proportion of children aged 14 and younger and a smaller proportion of seniors aged 65 and older than does the rest of the province.

Therefore, one possible explanation for the lower rate of poverty in Chicoutimi/Jonquière is that children under the age of 15 are generally less likely to be poor than seniors aged 65 and older. This region also contains fewer lone-parent families. Given that the majority of lone-parent families are poor, a region where they are fewer in number is more likely to have a lower poverty rate than other regions. The increase in poverty in Chicoutimi/Jonquière is due, at least in part, to its growing proportion of young people and young families.

Table 6: Demographic makeup of Quebec and CMAs, 1990 and 1995

	Quebec (province)		Montréal		Quebec City		Chicoutimi/Jonquière		Sherbrooke		Trois-Rivières	
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995
Total population												
By age												
Under 15 years	21%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	23%	20%	21%	19%	20%	18%
Aged 15 to 34	31%	29%	32%	30%	32%	30%	31%	29%	33%	31%	31%	28%
Aged 35 to 65	37%	41%	39%	40%	39%	42%	38%	42%	37%	39%	39%	42%
Aged 65 and older	10%	11%	10%	11%	10%	10%	8%	10%	10%	11%	11%	12%
By gender												
Men	49%	49%	48%	49%	48%	48%	50%	49%	49%	49%	48%	49%
Women	51%	51%	52%	51%	52%	52%	50%	51%	51%	51%	52%	51%
Persons living alone												
By age												
Aged 65 and younger	76%	74%	76%	76%	78%	77%	74%	74%	78%	78%	76%	74%
Aged 65 and older	24%	26%	24%	24%	22%	23%	26%	26%	22%	22%	24%	26%
By gender												
Men	47%	47%	46%	47%	44%	44%	46%	46%	46%	46%	45%	44%
Women	53%	53%	54%	53%	56%	56%	54%	54%	54%	54%	55%	56%
Family type												
Couples without children	43%	45%	44%	44%	44%	45%	38%	42%	42%	45%	45%	46%
Aged 65 and older	26%	28%	26%	29%	23%	25%	21%	28%	26%	26%	23%	28%
Two-parent	40%	38%	37%	36%	39%	37%	47%	42%	40%	37%	38%	36%
Aged 30 and younger	9%	7%	9%	7%	8%	7%	10%	6%	12%	11%	9%	7%
Lone-parent	8%	10%	9%	10%	8%	9%	8%	8%	11%	12%	9%	11%
Aged 30 and younger	18%	16%	19%	18%	15%	14%	14%	14%	20%	20%	18%	17%
Other families	8%	8%	10%	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%
Children under age 18												
Aged 5 and younger	N/A	43%	N/A	45%	N/A	41%	N/A	38%	N/A	40%	N/A	39%
Aged 6 to 17	N/A	57%	N/A	55%	N/A	59%	N/A	62%	N/A	60%	N/A	61%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.
N/A: data not available

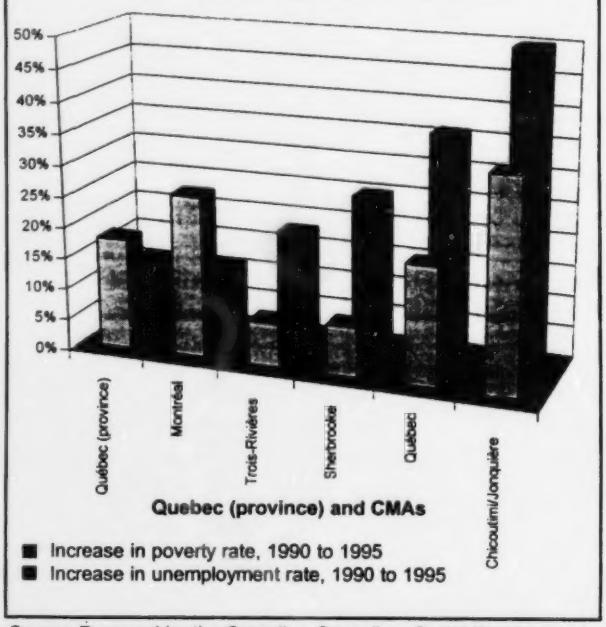
Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

The labour market

The demographic makeup of a particular region does not entirely explain why its poverty rate may differ from that of another. A weakening labour market is also an important factor. The beginning of the 1990s was marked by a recession during which a large number of people lost their jobs and fell below the poverty line. Looking at the variation between the rates of poverty and unemployment rates between 1990 and 1995 (Figure 1), there is a clear link between an increase in unemployment and an increase in poverty. With the exception of Montréal, a higher unemployment rate corresponds with a proportional increase in the poverty rate.

In addition to the effects of the recession, fundamental changes to the labour market resulted in the creation of new jobs which were less secure. This lower job quality had an impact on the standard of living and on poverty rates. In 1995, only eight per cent of people across the province who worked full-time throughout the year were poor. The poverty rate rose to 21 per cent for people who worked part-time for the entire year and to 38 per cent for those who did not work at all during the year (Table 7).

Figure 1
Changes in poverty and unemployment rates in Quebec (province) and CMAs, 1990 and 1995



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1996 Census data, and data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, 1990 and 1995.

Table 7: Poverty rates in Quebec (province) and CMAs by employment type, 1995

	More than 49 weeks		Less than 49 weeks	Unemployed
	Full-time	Part-time		
Quebec (province)	8%	17%	21%	38%
Chicoutimi/Jonquière	5%	16%	19%	33%
Quebec City	7%	19%	22%	39%
Sherbrooke	7%	19%	23%	37%
Trois-Rivières	6%	17%	21%	37%
Montréal	9%	19%	25%	44%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1996 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

The differences between regional labour markets can also have an important impact on the rise or fall of poverty rates in each region. As seen in Table 8, the number of persons holding a full-time job for the entire year declined by six per cent across the province between 1990 and 1995. In Chicoutimi/Jonquière, the number of persons with a full-time job for the entire year decreased by 10 per cent during this period. Given that full-time employment ensures a certain degree of financial security, the rapidly declining number of full-time jobs in Chicoutimi/Jonquière helps explain the significant increase in poverty in that region.

The increasing number of part-time employees and those without jobs are also important elements in the rise of poverty across the province and in its urban centres between 1990 and 1995.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, certain groups have been more likely than others to be affected by a weakened labour market. This is particularly true for young people. The increased and stubbornly high unemployment rate among young people, particularly among young families between 1990 and 1995, undoubtedly contributed to their increased likelihood of being poor. Despite the fact that young people are becoming increasingly better educated and face less competition from their peers in the labour market, they are less likely to obtain good quality jobs which would allow them to live above the poverty line.

Table 8: Changes in employment type by category, Quebec (province) and CMAs, 1990 and 1995

	More than 49 weeks		Less than 49 weeks	Unemployed
	Full-time	Part-time		
Quebec (province)	-6%	17%	4%	15%
Chicoutimi/Jonquière	-10%	20%	3%	14%
Quebec City	-6%	11%	9%	18%
Sherbrooke	1%	22%	6%	15%
Trois-Rivières	-6%	19%	3%	12%
Montréal	-6%	17%	5%	20%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1996 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the nature and progression of poverty in Quebec, particularly in five CMAs in the province. From 1990 to 1995, poverty rates increased for all age groups except seniors. Young people, particularly young families, experienced the highest increases in their poverty rates among all age groups. And although poverty in Montréal is widespread, the poverty rate increased most rapidly between 1990 and 1995 in Chicoutimi/Jonquière.

The labour market was largely responsible for this worsening situation. The recession at the beginning of the 1990s greatly affected the number and quality of jobs across the province and in the regions studied in this report. The spread of poverty in Quebec affected some groups more than others. The very slow recovery in employment between the end of the last recession and the 1996 Census, and the decline in the quality of the new jobs being created helps explain the increase in poverty among young families. On the eve of a debate on the redistribution of budgetary surpluses and a youth summit in Quebec, it would be appropriate to discuss eliminating the poverty gap in the province, particularly for young families.

There are several factors not included in this study that are worth further consideration regarding Quebec's poverty situation. These include: the impact of migration on poverty in Montréal; poverty among visible minorities, the disabled and Aboriginal peoples living in metropolitan regions; the impact of local economic restructuring on poverty rates; and changes to employment security programs and access to affordable day care.

In the coming months, the Canadian Council on Social Development will continue its examination of the problem of poverty. In the fall of 1999, the CCSD will publish a study of poverty in the 25 largest Canadian cities. The CCSD also plans to continue its examination of poverty in Quebec. It is currently seeking partners to share the cost of a detailed study of poverty in 23 urban centres in Quebec. The goal of the CCSD is to better understand the problem and nature of poverty in order to improve our ability to combat it.

Endnotes

[1] For more information about the nature of poverty in Quebec, please refer to *La pauvreté au Québec : bref historique et situation actuelle (1973-1994)*, Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu, Government of Quebec, November 1996.

[2] All figures in this report have been rounded, which can produce slight variations in the percentages reported.

[3] The poverty line used throughout this report is Statistics Canada's low income cut-off (LICO). Although Statistics Canada does not call the LICO a poverty line, it is nevertheless a reliable indicator of inequality.

[4] Census data allow for the study of poverty at several geographic levels. The level chosen for this report is Statistics Canada's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). A CMA is defined as an urban core of at least 100,000 people, together with surrounding urban and rural areas that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. There are six CMAs in Quebec: Montréal, Quebec, Hull/Ottawa, Chicoutimi/Jonquière, Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières. Because of difficulties with the availability and access to data, we have omitted the CMA of Hull/Ottawa from this study.

[5] Please see Chapter 1 of *The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty 1994* and *Income and Child Well-being: A new perspective on the poverty debate* (1999), both published by the CCSD.

[6] The method used to calculate the poverty gap in this study is different from that used by Statistics Canada. In this study, an individual's or family's negative income has not been changed to zero.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Glossary

Age: the age categories for families are based on the age of the head of the family or of the oldest spouse (if present).

Average poverty gap: the total poverty gap divided by the number of poor households.

Family: a group of persons living under the same roof and related by blood, marriage (including common-law) or adoption. All relations living together at the time of the survey are considered as family, regardless of the strength of the relationship.

Family type: two-parent or lone-parent families whose youngest child is no older than age 18.

Persons living alone: a person living in a household who has no familial ties to other persons in the household.

Poverty gap: the amount of money necessary to elevate a poor family's or a poor individual's income up to the poverty line. For example, a family of four with an income of $25,000 and living in a region with a LICO of $27,500 would have a poverty gap of $2,500.

Poor household: any family or individual whose income falls below the low income cut-off.

Appendix 1: Poverty in Quebec (province), 1990 and 1995

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	6,700,000	7,000,000	1,300,000	1,600,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	19%	23%	18%
By age											
Under age 15	1,400,000	1,350,000	270,000	350,000	21%	19%	21%	21%	19%	26%	34%
Aged 15 to 34	2,100,000	2,010,000	400,000	510,000	31%	29%	31%	31%	19%	25%	33%
Aged 35 to 64	2,500,000	2,850,000	420,000	570,000	37%	41%	33%	35%	17%	20%	19%
Aged 65 and older	680,000	770,000	190,000	210,000	10%	11%	15%	13%	28%	27%	-2%
By gender											
Men	3,300,000	3,400,000	560,000	740,000	49%	49%	44%	45%	17%	22%	28%
Women	3,400,000	3,500,000	720,000	890,000	51%	51%	56%	55%	21%	25%	20%
Persons living alone	860,000	980,000	370,000	490,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	43%	50%	16%
By age											
Under age 65	650,000	730,000	260,000	350,000	76%	74%	68%	71%	40%	48%	20%
Aged 65 and older	210,000	250,000	120,000	140,000	24%	26%	32%	29%	57%	56%	-2%
By gender											
Men	400,000	460,000	150,000	210,000	47%	47%	41%	43%	38%	46%	22%
Women	460,000	520,000	220,000	280,000	53%	53%	59%	57%	48%	54%	13%
Family type	1,900,000	1,970,000	310,000	380,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	16%	19%	18%
Couples without children	830,000	880,000	100,000	116,000	43%	45%	32%	30%	12%	13%	9%
Aged 65 and older	215,000	250,000	35,000	33,000	26%	28%	35%	28%	16%	13%	-19%
Two-parent	760,000	750,000	89,000	120,000	40%	38%	29%	31%	12%	16%	37%
Aged 30 and younger	72,000	53,000	15,000	16,000	9%	7%	17%	13%	21%	30%	45%
Lone-parent	160,000	190,000	86,000	105,000	8%	10%	28%	28%	54%	55%	3%
Aged 30 and younger	29,000	31,000	24,000	27,000	18%	16%	28%	26%	83%	87%	5%
Other families	160,000	155,000	35,000	40,000	8%	8%	11%	10%	22%	26%	18%
Children under age 18		940,000		230,000		100%		100%		24%	
Aged 5 and younger		400,000		110,000		43%		48%		28%	
Aged 6 to 17		540,000		117,000		57%		52%		22%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Appendix 2: Poverty in Montréal CMA

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	3,100,000	3,270,000	670,000	890,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	22%	27%	26%
By age											
Under age 15	580,000	625,000	140,000	193,000	19%	19%	21%	22%	24%	31%	28%
Aged 15 to 34	1,000,000	970,000	220,000	285,000	32%	30%	32%	32%	22%	29%	34%
Aged 35 to 64	1,200,000	1,310,000	210,000	295,000	39%	40%	31%	33%	18%	23%	29%
Aged 65 and older	320,000	365,000	110,000	120,000	10%	11%	16%	13%	34%	33%	-4%
By gender											
Men	1,500,000	1,590,000	300,000	405,000	48%	49%	44%	46%	20%	25%	27%
Women	1,600,000	1,682,990	380,000	485,000	52%	51%	56%	54%	24%	29%	21%
Persons living alone	450,000	512,200	200,000	265,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	44%	52%	16%
By age											
Under age 65	350,000	390,000	140,000	190,000	76%	76%	69%	72%	40%	49%	22%
Aged 65 and older	110,000	125,000	64,000	75,000	24%	24%	31%	28%	58%	60%	3%
By gender											
Men	210,000	240,000	83,000	115,000	46%	47%	41%	43%	40%	48%	21%
Women	250,000	275,000	120,000	150,000	54%	53%	59%	57%	48%	55%	14%
Family type	860,000	905,000	160,000	205,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	19%	23%	22%
Couples without children	380,000	400,000	50,000	60,000	44%	44%	31%	29%	13%	15%	14%
Aged 65 and older	97,000	115,000	21,000	21,000	26%	29%	42%	35%	22%	18%	-16%
Two-parent	320,000	330,000	46,000	65,000	37%	36%	29%	32%	14%	20%	37%
Aged 30 and younger	28,000	22,000	7,000	7,700	9%	7%	15%	12%	25%	35%	40%
Lone-parent	79,000	95,000	44,000	57,000	9%	10%	28%	28%	56%	60%	8%
Aged 30 and younger	15,000	17,000	12,000	14,500	19%	18%	27%	25%	80%	85%	7%
Other families	82,000	80,000	20,000	23,000	10%	9%	13%	11%	24%	29%	18%
Children under age 18		430,000		120,000		100%		100%		28%	
Aged 5 and younger		195,000		62,000		45%		51%		32%	
Aged 6 to 17		235,000		60,000		55%		49%		26%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Appendix 3: Poverty in Quebec City CMA

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	630,000	660,000	120,000	150,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	19%	23%	19%
By age											
Under age 15	120,000	120,000	20,000	25,000	19%	18%	17%	17%	17%	21%	25%
Aged 15 to 34	200,000	195,000	38,000	50,000	32%	30%	33%	33%	19%	26%	35%
Aged 35 to 64	240,000	275,000	38,000	52,000	39%	42%	33%	35%	16%	19%	19%
Aged 65 and older	59,000	69,000	20,000	23,000	10%	10%	17%	15%	34%	33%	-2%
By gender											
Men	300,000	320,000	49,000	66,000	48%	48%	42%	44%	16%	21%	26%
Women	320,000	340,000	67,000	84,000	52%	52%	58%	56%	21%	25%	18%
Persons living alone	89,000	105,000	40,000	54,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	45%	51%	14%
By age											
Under age 65	69,000	81,000	28,000	39,000	78%	77%	70%	72%	41%	48%	19%
Aged 65 and older	20,000	24,000	12,000	15,000	22%	23%	30%	28%	60%	63%	4%
By gender											
Men	39,000	46,000	15,000	22,000	44%	44%	38%	41%	38%	48%	24%
Women	50,000	58,000	24,000	32,000	56%	56%	62%	59%	48%	55%	15%
Family type	180,000	185,000	28,000	35,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	16%	19%	22%
Couples without children	78,000	84,000	10,000	12,000	44%	45%	36%	35%	13%	14%	11%
Aged 65 and older	18,000	21,000	4,000	4,000	23%	25%	40%	33%	22%	19%	-14%
Two-parent	70,000	69,000	6,700	9,300	39%	37%	24%	27%	10%	13%	41%
Aged 30 and younger	5,400	4,600	1,100	1,400	8%	7%	16%	15%	20%	30%	49%
Lone-parent	15,000	17,000	7,400	8,700	8%	9%	27%	25%	49%	51%	4%
Aged 30 and younger	2,200	2,400	1,900	2,100	15%	14%	26%	24%	86%	88%	1%
Other families	16,000	16,000	3,600	4,300	9%	9%	13%	13%	23%	27%	19%
Children under age 18		86,765		18,065		100%		100%		21%	
Aged 5 and younger		35,780		8,495		41%		47%		24%	
Aged 6 to 17		50,985		9,570		59%		53%		19%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Appendix 4: Poverty in Chicoutimi/Jonquière CMA

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	160,000	158,000	25,000	33,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	16%	21%	34%
By age											
Under age 15	36,000	31,000	5,200	6,100	23%	20%	20%	19%	14%	20%	36%
Aged 15 to 34	49,000	45,000	8,200	10,000	31%	29%	32%	31%	17%	22%	33%
Aged 35 to 64	59,000	66,000	8,800	12,000	38%	42%	35%	37%	15%	18%	22%
Aged 65 and older	13,000	15,000	3,200	4,000	8%	10%	13%	12%	25%	27%	8%
By gender											
Men	78,000	78,000	11,000	15,000	50%	49%	42%	45%	14%	19%	36%
Women	79,000	80,000	15,000	18,000	50%	51%	58%	55%	19%	23%	19%
Persons living alone	14,000	16,000	6,300	8,400	100%	100%	100%	100%	45%	53%	17%
By age											
Under age 65	10,000	12,000	4,400	6,000	74%	74%	70%	71%	44%	50%	14%
Aged 65 and older	3,500	4,300	1,900	2,400	26%	26%	30%	29%	54%	56%	3%
By gender											
Men	6,400	7,500	2,300	3,300	46%	46%	37%	40%	36%	44%	22%
Women	7,400	8,800	4,000	5,000	54%	54%	63%	60%	54%	57%	5%
Family type	45,000	46,000	6,700	8,500	100%	100%	100%	100%	15%	18%	24%
Couples without children	17,000	19,000	2,100	2,900	38%	42%	31%	34%	12%	15%	24%
Aged 65 and older	3,600	5,300	630	790	21%	28%	30%	27%	18%	15%	-15%
Two-parent	21,000	19,000	1,800	2,500	47%	42%	27%	29%	9%	13%	54%
Aged 30 and younger	2,000	1,200	350	360	10%	6%	19%	14%	18%	30%	71%
Lone-parent	3,500	3,800	1,900	2,100	8%	8%	28%	25%	54%	55%	2%
Aged 30 and younger	490	550	400	500	14%	14%	21%	24%	82%	91%	11%
Other families	3,400	3,500	900	1,000	8%	8%	13%	12%	26%	29%	8%
Children under age 18		23,000		4,600		100%		100%		20%	
Aged 5 and younger		8,600		2,000		38%		43%		23%	
Aged 6 to 17		14,000		2,600		62%		57%		19%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Appendix 5: Poverty in Sherbrooke CMA

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	130,000	143,000	27,000	32,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	21%	22%	8%
By age											
Under age 15	28,000	27,000	5,500	6,400	21%	19%	20%	20%	20%	24%	21%
Aged 15 to 34	44,000	44,000	10,000	12,000	33%	31%	37%	37%	23%	27%	20%
Aged 35 to 64	49,000	56,000	8,100	11,000	37%	39%	30%	34%	17%	20%	19%
Aged 65 and older	13,000	15,000	3,400	3,400	10%	11%	13%	10%	26%	23%	-13%
By gender											
Men	65,000	69,000	11,000	14,000	49%	49%	41%	44%	17%	20%	20%
Women	69,000	73,000	16,000	18,000	51%	51%	59%	56%	23%	25%	6%
Persons living alone	21,000	24,000	9,400	12,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	45%	50%	12%
By age											
Under age 65	16,000	19,000	7,100	9,700	78%	78%	76%	78%	44%	51%	15%
Aged 65 and older	4,600	5,400	2,300	2,700	22%	22%	24%	22%	50%	50%	0%
By gender											
Men	9,400	11,000	3,700	5,500	46%	46%	39%	44%	39%	50%	27%
Women	11,000	13,000	5,800	6,900	54%	54%	61%	56%	53%	53%	1%
Family type	38,000	40,000	6,400	7,100	100%	100%	100%	100%	17%	18%	5%
Couples without children	15,500	18,000	1,900	2,000	42%	45%	30%	28%	12%	11%	-9%
Aged 65 and older	4,000	4,700	550	380	26%	26%	29%	19%	14%	8%	-41%
Two-parent	15,000	15,000	1,700	2,000	40%	37%	27%	28%	11%	13%	18%
Aged 30 and younger	1,800	1,600	450	430	12%	11%	26%	22%	25%	27%	8%
Lone-parent	4,000	4,700	2,200	2,500	11%	12%	35%	35%	55%	53%	-3%
Aged 30 and younger	800	920	710	770	20%	20%	32%	31%	89%	84%	-6%
Other families	2,800	2,700	550	660	8%	7%	9%	9%	20%	24%	24%
Children under age 18		20,000		4,400		100%		100%		22%	
Aged 5 and younger		8,000		2,100		40%		48%		26%	
Aged 6 to 17		12,000		2,300		60%		52%		19%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca

Appendix 6: Poverty in Trois-Rivières CMA

	Total		Poor		Total Distribution		Distribution of Poor		Poverty Rate		Change
	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	1990	1995	
Total population	123,000	136,000	27,000	32,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	22%	24%	7%
By age											
Under age 15	26,000	25,000	5,400	6,100	20%	18%	20%	19%	21%	24%	17%
Aged 15 to 34	41,000	38,000	8,700	10,000	31%	28%	32%	32%	21%	26%	24%
Aged 35 to 64	52,000	57,000	9,400	11,000	39%	42%	35%	35%	18%	19%	7%
Aged 65 and older	14,000	16,000	3,600	4,200	11%	12%	13%	13%	26%	26%	2%
By gender											
Men	64,000	66,000	11,000	14,000	48%	49%	41%	44%	17%	21%	23%
Women	69,000	70,000	16,000	18,000	52%	51%	59%	56%	23%	26%	11%
Persons living alone	18,000	21,000	8,900	11,000	100%	100%	100%	100%	49%	52%	6%
By age											
Under age 65	14,000	16,000	6,400	8,400	76%	74%	71%	73%	46%	53%	15%
Aged 65 and older	4,500	5,500	2,600	3,100	24%	26%	29%	27%	58%	56%	-2%
By gender											
Men	8,200	9,400	3,400	4,600	45%	44%	38%	40%	41%	49%	18%
Women	10,000	12,000	5,500	6,800	55%	56%	62%	60%	55%	57%	3%
Family type	38,000	39,000	6,500	7,400	100%	100%	100%	100%	17%	19%	11%
Couples without children	17,500	18,000	2,000	2,300	45%	46%	31%	31%	11%	13%	12%
Aged 65 and older	4,100	5,000	470	590	23%	28%	24%	26%	11%	12%	3%
Two-parent	15,000	14,000	1,700	1,900	38%	36%	26%	26%	11%	14%	20%
Aged 30 and younger	1,300	980	280	310	9%	7%	16%	16%	22%	32%	47%
Lone-parent	3,500	4,200	2,100	2,500	9%	11%	32%	34%	60%	60%	-1%
Aged 30 and younger	620	710	550	650	18%	17%	26%	26%	89%	92%	3%
Other families	3,300	2,900	700	700	8%	7%	11%	9%	21%	24%	14%
Children under age 18		18,000		4,400		100%		100%		24%	
Aged 5 and younger		7,100		2,000		39%		45%		28%	
Aged 6 to 17		11,000		2,400		61%		55%		22%	

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using 1991 and 1995 Census data, custom tabulations.
Note: Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.

Canadian Council on Social Development
441 MacLaren, 4th floor, Ottawa (ON) K2P 2H3 Tel: (613) 236-8977
Fax: (613) 236-2750 · E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Internet: www.ccsd.ca